UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/PRST/1996/26
22 May 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3666th meeting of the Security Council, held on 22 May 1996 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Croatia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the letter of the Secretary-General to its President of 20 May 1996 (S/1996/363) in which he informed the Council of the assessment of the Transitional Administrator that the military component of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) had been deployed and was ready to undertake its mission of demilitarization of the Region. That mission of demilitarization began on 21 May 1996.

"The Security Council calls upon the parties to comply strictly with their obligations under the Basic Agreement of 12 November 1995 on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (S/1995/951, annex) and to cooperate fully with UNTAES. It stresses that they must refrain from any unilateral action which could hinder the implementation of the Basic Agreement including the process of demilitarization.

"The Security Council reminds the parties that the successful implementation of the Basic Agreement requires the respect by them of the highest level of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. It calls upon the parties to continue to cooperate with UNTAES in adopting confidence-building measures to promote an environment of mutual trust.

"The Security Council calls upon the Government of the Republic of Croatia to grant amnesty to all persons who, either voluntarily or by coercion, served in the civil administration, military or police forces of the local Serb authorities in the former United Nations Protected Areas with the exception of those who committed war crimes as defined in international law. It notes that the law on amnesty recently passed in the Republic of Croatia is a step in this direction. The Council calls upon the Government of the Republic of Croatia to make this amnesty

comprehensive as soon as possible and stresses the importance such a measure would have for maintaining public confidence and stability during the demilitarization and demobilization process.

"The Security Council underlines the key importance of attention to the need for economic reconstruction and rehabilitation of the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and encourages Member States to contribute to this end.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter and requests the Secretary-General to keep it regularly informed of developments in the situation."